

VZCZCXYZ0015  
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHC #6254 0231855  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
O 231846Z JAN 09  
FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO AMEMBASSY WINDHOEK IMMEDIATE 0000

UNCLAS STATE 006254

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [ENVR](#) [WA](#)  
SUBJECT: DEMARCHE: EXPORT PERMITS FOR NAMIBIAN CHEETAHS

REF: NONE

11. (U) This is an action request.

12. (SBU) The objective of this demarche is to encourage the Government of Namibia (GRN) to issue export permits for 14 cheetahs to be sent to two world-class animal husbandry facilities in the U.S. The animals in question are currently housed by the Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF) center in northern Namibia. CCF and the Smithsonian Institution,s National Zoo have already obtained the necessary import permits for the U.S. and submitted complete applications for the export permits from Namibia a number of months ago. Smithsonian personnel report that the permits have been approved at a technical level but, despite repeated interventions, the final approval has not yet been granted. The cats cannot be returned to the wild in Namibia due to poor hunting skills and a lack of release sites. Namibian government policy does not allow the breeding of these animals in their current location. Once imported to the U.S., these cheetahs would help scientists to determine how to consistently reproduce this species under controlled conditions in facilities dedicated to breeding with minimal public disturbance. The overall objective of the breeding programs is to promote the survival of the species.

13. (U) Post is requested to deliver the talking points below to the Minister of Environment or his representative as soon as possible.

Begin suggested talking points:

-- Namibia is fortunate to have tremendous natural resources, including the largest and healthiest cheetah population in the world. We commend your impressive effort to protect cheetahs globally and improve the world,s understanding of how best to promote cheetah conservation.

-- The Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF), located in northern Namibia, is at the forefront of cheetah protection. In addition to field research and outreach, CCF is active in rescuing adult cheetahs that have been trapped by local farmers and young cubs that have been orphaned or confiscated as illegally or inappropriately held on private farms. CCF currently maintains 45 such animals on a reserve in Namibia.

-- In 2001, CCF identified 10 cheetahs which were sent to the U.S. to introduce new genes to the North American cheetah population. This project was a remarkable success as eight of the animals reproduced.

-- The Smithsonian Institution,s National Zoological Park, in collaboration with the White Oak Conservation Center (WOCC) and cooperation with the CCF, seeks to expand upon the remarkable success from the 2001 project and import an additional 14 cheetahs to two world-class husbandry facilities in the U.S. The animals in question cannot be returned to the wild in Namibia due to poor hunting skills and a lack of release sites. Furthermore, we understand that Namibian government policy does not allow the breeding of

these animals in their current location.

-- Under this project, ten cheetahs would be housed at the Cheetah Science Facility at the Smithsonian Institution,s Conservation and Research Center in Front Royal, VA. The remaining four animals would be housed at the WOCC.

-- The cheetah is formally listed as &endangered8 by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and &vulnerable8 by the IUCN-World Conservation Union. By issuing export permits for these animals, the Namibian government will be continuing to demonstrate its long-standing commitment to cheetah conservation.

-- These animals, which are not able to breed in their current location, will be part of a scientific world-class husbandry program in the U.S. and, hopefully, will contribute significantly to the cheetah gene pool in North America and to improving the sustainability of the cheetah population globally.

-- The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has issued an import permit for these 14 cats which is valid until July 2009. We understand that CCF has submitted a complete application to the Namibian government requesting export permits for the cats and is prepared to ship the animals in accordance with international standards. We urge you to issue as soon as possible export permits valid until July 2009 so that all parties involved are able to finalize the transportation logistics and move the animals as quickly as possible.

End Talking Points

14. (U) A scanned copy of the U.S. import permit and other supporting materials will be sent to post via e-mail.

15. (U) The Department appreciates post,s assistance in moving this forward. Please report back via e-mail to OES: Christine Dawson and Hollis Summers, AF/EPS: Mohammed Zikry and AF/S Elizabeth Pelletreau.  
CLINTON